

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
Lancashire WITCHES.

Containing the manner of their becoming  
such; their Enchantments, Spels, Re-  
vels, Merry Pranks, raising of Storms  
and Tempests, riding on Winds, &c.

The Entertainments and Frolicks which  
have happened among them: with the  
Loves and Humours of Roger and  
Dorothy.



ALSO,  
A Treatise of Witches in general,  
Conduive to Mirth and Recreation.



The History of

# The Lancashire Witches,



CHAP. I.

*The Lancashire Witch's Temptation,  
and of the Devil's appearing to her  
in sundry Shapes, and giving her  
Money.*

**L**ANCASHIRE is a famous and noted place abounding with hills, rivers, woods, pastures, and pleasant Towns; many of which are of great Antiquity. It has also been famous for Witches, and the strange Pranks they have played.

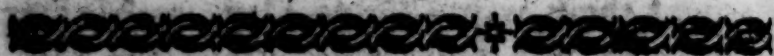
Therefore, since the name of Lancashire Witches have been so frequent in the Mouths of old and young, and many imperfect stories have been rumoured abroad, it would doubtless tend to the Satisfaction of the Reader to give some account of them in their merry Sports and Pastimes.

Some Time since lived one Mother Cuthbert, in a little Hovel at the Bottom of a Hill, called, Wood-and-Mountain-Hill, in Lancashire.—This Woman had two lusty daughters, who both carded and spun for their Living, yet was very poor, which made them often repine at, and lament their want.—One Day, as Mother Cuthbert was sauntering about the Hill-side, picking the Wood off the bushes, out started a thing like a rabbit, which run a-



about two or three Times, and then changed into a Pig, and afterwards into a Man, which made the old Beldame to tremble,

yet she had no power to run away. So putting a purse of money in her hand, and charging her to be there the next day, he immediately vanished away; and old mother Cuthbert returned home, being somewhat disturbed between jealousy and fear.



## CHAP. II.

*Strange and wonderful Apparitions; how one Witch had Power to make another; and other strange Things.*

**T**HE old woman opened not her purse till she came home, and then found in it ten angels; so calling to her Daughters, she told them what had happened. The Wenches rejoiced the Treasure of the House encreased, that they might stuff their bellies with Beef and Pudding, which they had long been strangers to; and advised the Mother to go again as she was ordered, and so she did. The first Thing she saw was a Tree rising out of the Ground, which moved towards her, and to her great surprize multiplied into a very thick Wood round her, so that she was afraid



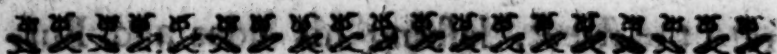
of losing herself; when on a sudden she saw a House, and heard the sound of Musick. — This appeared more strange, however she took courage and went towards it, where she found a Matron standing at the Door, who very kindly invited her in, where she found a great many Women, all dancing and revelling; and the House



appeared like a stately Palace, and tables furnished with variety of Delicacies. — The Dance being ended, she was desired to sit at table with the rest; but she scrupled it at first; but at length being hungry, she fell roundly to. — After Din-

ner the matron which received her, by  
 striking the floor with her wand, caused  
 divers of the familiars in the shapes of  
 cats, bears, apes, &c. to enter and dance  
 antic dances, whilst she played on the grid-  
 iron and tongs.—This done, taking Mother  
 Cuthbert aside, she demanded how she liked  
 their cheer and sport? She answered, Very  
 well; but desired to know where she was,  
 and her company? Mother Crady then told  
 her that she was Witch of Penmure, a great  
 Mountain in Wales, and the rest were her  
 country-women of the same faculty; and  
 being desirous to have her of the fraternity,  
 she contrived this way to entertain her, to  
 shew that she might always live jocund and  
 merry.—Mother Cuthbert overcome with  
 persuasions, consented, when immediately  
 they anointed her breast with a certain oint-  
 ment, then speaking a charm or two, they  
 gave her the rest to use upon occasion; and  
 also in another box, a little thing like a  
 Mole that was to be her Imp. So all  
 mounted upon a coal staff, away they flew  
 and she with them, but they left her at the  
 door of her own house, and still kept on  
 their way with the wind.





## CHAP. III.

*A Lancashire Witch enchants the Mayor of the Town, who had caused her to be whipp'd, with the circumstance attending it.*

**M**OTHER Cuthbert being thus entered into the Society of Witches, by the force of her ointment, and council of her imp, who could speak when he pleased, and turn himself into divers shapes, finding the power she had, began to play many pranks.

Some time before this the Mayor of Lancaster, had caused Mother Cuthbert to be whipt for breaking his pales to make her a fire in the cold winter, which she resented much; and now knowing her power to revenge it, she trudges thither, where she found him carousing with many friends. She took an opportunity to slip a letter into his hands, and retired unknown, which he had no sooner perused, but telling his company he must run a race he immediately went into the next room, and stripped himself stark-naked, then taking a hand-whip, he ran

into the street, lashing his sides and Buttocks, crying, there he goes, there he goes, I win! I win! whilst the People followed, calling him to stay, thinking he was distracted; yet he ran on to the further end of the town, lashing himself till he was bloody. At which time coming to his wits, he was in the greatest consternation imaginable, swearing the devil had put this trick upon him, for all the time he thought he had been on horseback, and was riding a race, not feeling the lashes he gave himself, till he had compleated his number and filled the measure of the Witches resentment.



#### CHAP. IV.

*The old Woman's two Daughters become Witches; and one of them in the shape of a Mare, is revenged upon her false sweetheart and Rival.*

**M**Other Cuthbert growing more and more perfect in her Art, resolved to bring in her Daughters for a snack, and thereupon communicated to them all that had befallen her.—They were content to be ruled by their Mother, and she anoint-



ed them, and used the best Means she was able to make them perfect in their new trade.

Their Names was Margery and Cicily, the first was courted by Roger Clodpate, a plain downright Country Fellow; but he was wheedled from her by Dorothy, a Gentleman's Dairy-Maid not far distant. This vexed Margery, and made her resolve to be revenged for it; so one Day, as they went abroad in the fields, about courtship, she, by casting up Dust in the



Air, and other enchantments, raised up a mighty storm of Rain, which so swelled the Ditches, that they overflowed in their way and stopped them; but as they began to think of going back, Margery immediately transformed herself in the

shape of a black Mare, and came gently towards them, when Roger, glad of the opportunity, first mouned his sweetheart, and then up himself. But they were no sooner in the middle of the water, than she threw them heels over head, and ran away laughing soon recovering her shape, while Roger and Doll were in a piteous case, and forced to trudge home like drowned rats, with the story of their unfortunate disaster.



#### CHAP. V.

*A Witch rescues a Man who was going to Gaol, and plagues the Bailiffs, by leading them a Dance over Hedges and Ditches.*

A Poor man being arrested by a cruel creditor for debt, and he not being able to pay it, they were carrying him to Lancaster Goal when Mother Cutbert met them, and desired to know the matter. The officers answered her very furiously, pushing her aside, which raising her choler, she said, but you shall let him go before we do part; and they said, he should not. Whereupon she bid the poor

man stop his ears close: And then she drew out a pipe, which had been given her by the Witch of Penmure, and then set to piping, and led them thro' hedges and thorns, over ditches, banks and pales, sometimes tumbling, and other times tearing and bruising their flesh; while the poor fellow got time enough to make his escape, and the catch-poles cried out for mercy, thinking the devil had led them a dance. At length she left them in the middle of a stinking pond, to shift for themselves.



## CHAP. VI.

*Of a Lancashire Witch being in Love with a Gentleman; of her haunting him in the shape of a Hare, and obtaining her Ends.*

CICELY, the youngest daughter of the Lancashire Witch, being in love with a gentleman's son about a mile from their home, was resolved to have him in her arms at any rate; wherefore knowing he admired hunting, she often turned herself into a Hare, to make him sport, and still drew him towards her mother's

house, for when he went that way he was used to call and chat with them, the which caused in Cicely the first passion; but once this had like to have proved fatal, for her charm wanting something of its force, one of the foremost hounds caught her by the haunches, just as she was entering her creep-hole, and gave her a terrible pinch, and happy it was for her that she was so near or her loving had been for ever spoiled.—The young man commonly losing the hare about this house, began to wonder, and supposing it to have run in at the sink, he entered the house, where he found Cicely rubbing of her backside, but not meeting what he sought, not looking for such a transformation, he departed and she for the future grew cautious of shewing him any more sport of that kind.—But when he was going to be married to a beautiful young gentlewoman, she by enchantment caused the lady to lose herself in a wood, and there cast her into a deep sleep for a day and a night.—In the mean time she personated the bride, enjoyed the bridegroom, by casting a mist before his eyes; but knowing it could not long continue, she cast him likewise into a deep Sleep,



and then fetched the young Lady to his Arms, that when they both awaked, they thought they had been all the time together.



# CHAP. VII.

*Mother Cuthbert enchants several Thieves, and takes away their Money; with the Manner of setting Spells.*

OLD Mother Cuthbert going along the road, she overheard some thieves bragging of a mighty Purchase they had made; whereupon she resolved with herself, that she would come in for a Share, and accordingly she muttered some words, upon which the horses began for to stumble, which made them curse and swear. — At length they supposed they heard the rattling of clubs and staves, as if the whole Country had been up in Arms to seize them; and finding they could not spur their Horses on, nor make them stir a Foot, they got off, leaving their Portmanteaus behind them, and ran away on foot. The Prize she conveyed home, and hearing some poor People had been rob-

ed, she gave them back what they had lost. The fright the Rogues were put into was caused by enchantment, in which she was so good a Proficient, that she often would set Spells on the Highway, so that any being robbed, the Rogues had no Power to get away.



### *The Description of a SPELL.*

A Spell is a Piece of Paper written with magic Characters, fixed in the critical Season of the Moon, and Conjunction of the Planets ; or sometimes by repeating mis-

tical words.—But of these there are many  
forts.

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## CHAP. VII.

*The Manner of a Witch Feast, or a  
General Meeting.*

**T**HERE being a general meeting of the Witches to consult for merry pranks, and to be even with any who had injured them, one of them must needs bring her husband with her; but charged him, and made him promise that whatever he saw or heard, he should not speak a word of it. To this he promised to be obedient. He was carried thither in the night, but he knew not which way; and there he found a stately Palace, (to his thinking) furnished with goods of exceeding value, and it shined in the night with artificial lights as at noon day. Here they had all manner of good cheer, and he was as frolicksome as the merriest. The man observed his covenant till he came to eat, when looking about and seeing no salt, (for it seems Witches never use any) he, before he was aware, cried out, What in God's name have we no salt here? Up-

on this all the lights immediately went out, and the company flew away.—So dreadful is the name of God to those servants of Satan.—Storms of hail and rain, attended with lightning, and terrible claps of thunder ensued. The rain poured on him, the wind blew, and instead of a palace, when day light appeared, he found himself in an old uncovered barn, on a steep hill, about twenty miles from home; and from that time he never desired to go with his wife to see curiosities.





## CHAP. IX.

*The Humours of Roger and Doll, with the Manner how they were served by the Lancashire Witch.*

**R**OGER and Dorothy being got in a merry humour, one day meeting with Margery, began to swear at her, and called her leaden heels, but she passed by as if she minded it not.—They had not far to go before there was a stile to go over; but when they was on the top they could not get down on either side, fancying there was ponds of water round about them, till some travellers came by, who finding them thus mounted on the wooden horse in a strange posture, made them dismount.—However, not satisfied, she watched their motions, and found 'em enter into a barn that stood by the road, where the cows used to be driven in to be milked.—There being seated upon the straw, toying together, and wondering at what had happened, they proceeded to be a little more familiar together, resolving, as the marriage was agreed on, to have a

taste before hand. But just as they were going to offer upon Love's Altar, Margery, who stood there invisible, sprinkled Roger with a certain Dust, which changed his very Countenance, making it appear to his Mistress like an Ass's Head, which so frightened her, that she gave a lusty spring, and throwing him quite over, she got up, running and crying out **The Devil! the Devil!**—This so terrified Roger, that, without pulling up his Breeches, he followed, crying out, **What ails you my Dear? What ails you?**—In this Manner, to the great Laughter of a great Number of People, they ran until they were so tired they were forced to lie down, being no longer able to hold out.—Thus at this time her revenge was satisfied.



## CHAP. X.

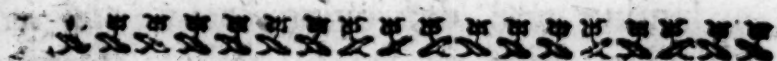
*How some Witches revelling in a Gentleman's House, served the Servants who surprised them.*



**I**T happened one time that a great number of Lancashire Witches were revelling in a gentleman's house in his absence, and making merry with what they found, the dogs not daring to stir, they having, it seems, power to strike them mute.—However, during their frolick

some of the servants came home, and thinking they had been ordinary thieves, went to seize them.—But they happened to catch a Tartar; for each taking one, they flew away with them, who in vain called for help, till they had lodged them on the top of very high trees; and then raising prodigious storms of thunder and lightning, with hard showers of rain, they left them there to do penance for their intrusion.





## CHAP. XI.

*A brief Treatise on Witches in general,  
with several Things wortby Note.*

**A** Bout this time great search was made after Witches, and many were apprehended, but most of them gave the Hangman and the Gaoler the Slip; tho' some hold, that when a Witch is taken she hath no Power to avoid Justice.—It happened as some of them were going in a Cart to be tried, a Coach passed by, in which appeared a Person like a Judge, who calling to one, bid her be of good Comfort, for neither she nor any of her Company should be harmed; and in that Night all the Prison Locks flew open, and they made their Escape. And many, when they have been cast into the Water for a trial, have swam like a Cork. One of them boasted she could go over the sea in an Egg-shell.—It is held on all hands they adore the Devil, and became his Bond-Slaves, to have for a term of Years, their Pleasure and revenge. And indeed many of 'em are more mischievous than others,

in laming and destroying cattle, and in drowning ships at sea by raising storms.

—But the Lancashire Witches we see chiefly divert themselves in merriment and are therefore found to be more sociable than the rest.



CHAP.

( 23 )  
CHAP. XII.

*A Description of the famous Lapland Witches.*



**T**HE Lapland Witches they tell us, can send Wind to Sailors, and take delight in nothing more than raising of storms and tempests, which they effect by repeating certain charms, and throwing up land in the air.——The best way to avoid their power, is to believe in God; who will not suffer them to injure us; for here they are held to be restrained.—As many mistake their children and relations

to be bewitched, when they die of distempers some what strange to the unskilful, for one poor woman or other is safely accused of Things which they are entirely ignorant of.

This may suffice as to what commonly or really relates to Witches; or such as are imagined to be possessed with evil and familiar Spirits.

F I N I S.

